

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 GEORGE 01684 01 OF 02 301638Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00
PM-03 L-01 DODE-00 PRS-01 IO-06 SP-02 EUR-08
EB-04 AF-04 EA-06 /070 W
-----018565 301715Z /40

R 301540Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5006
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1684

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CU, GY
SUBJECT: FONMIN WILLS COMMENTS ON BURNHAM'S TRIP TO CUBA

REF: A. GEORGETOWN 1595, B. GEORGETOWN 1597

SUMMARY: THE MAIN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PRIME MINISTER
BURNHAM'S VISIT TO CUBA, ACCORDING TO FONMIN WILLS, WAS
TO CLARIFY THINKING IN BOTH COUNTRIES CONCERNING EACH
OTHER. CASTRO SOUGHT GOG SUPPORT FOR CUBA'S ACTIVITIES IN
AFRICA AND AT THE NON-ALIGNED, BUT THE GUYANESE REPORTEDLY WERE
NON-COMMITAL. CASTRO ASKED THE GUYANESE TO SPEAK TO AMBASSADOR
YOUNG ABOUT LIFTING THE TRADE EMBARGO. THE GUYANESE
APPEAR TO HAVE MADE ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE CASTRO
THAT CHEDDI JAGAN'S PEOPLES PROGRESSIVE PARTY (PPP) IS
NOT A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE PEOPLES NATIONAL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 GEORGE 01684 01 OF 02 301638Z

CONGRESS (PNC) BUT THE RESPONSE, AS DESCRIBED BY WILLS,
APPEARS UNCLEAR. THE GUYANESE EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT
AND DISSATISFACTION OVER THE ATTITUDE OF THE SOVIETS
TOWARD THE GOG. LIVING CONDITIONS IN CUBA REPORTEDLY
ARE VERY DIFFICULT. FROM MY CONVERSATIONS WITH
WILLS AND OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION, IT APPEARS
THAT THE VISIT MAY HAVE BEEN BENEFICIAL IN GIVING THE

GUYANESE A SENSE OF REALITY. IT APPEARS THAT NO JOINT DECISION OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE WERE TAKEN, BUT OF THAT WE CANNOT YET BE CERTAIN. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A 2-HOUR MEETING WITH THE CHARGE ON JULY 27 WILLS DESCRIBED THE JULY 22-25 VISIT OF THE GUYANESE GROUP TO CUBA. WILLS SAID THAT PRESIDENT CASTRO AND PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM ARRIVED AT THEIR FIRST MEETING EACH BELIEVING THAT THE OTHER HAD INITIATED THE VISIT, WHEREAS IN FACT CUBAN AMBASSADOR IVAN MARTINEZ HAD MISLED BOTH OF THEM. MARTINEZ WAS EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETINGS AS A CONSEQUENCE. WILLS--BEFORE THE VISIT--HAD APPEARED DEPRESSED AND PERSONALLY UNHAPPY ABOUT IT, PARTLY AT LEAST BECAUSE HE HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED WHEREAS MINISTER OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, HUBERT JACK, AND MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, DESMOND HOYTE, HAD BEEN CONSULTED. THEREFORE, HE HAD CERTAIN PLEASURE IN OBSERVING THE CONFUSION OVER THE ARRANGEMENT.

2. KEY POINTS MADE BY WILLS FOLLOW:

A. ACCOMPLISHMENTS. THE TRIP HAD ENABLED GUYANESE AND CUBAN LEADERS TO CLARIFY THEIR UNDERSTANDINGS OF EACH OTHER'S ATTITUDE ON A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES. WILLS FELT THAT THIS WAS BENEFICIAL IN MODERATING BURNHAM'S THINKING. NOTHING CONCRETE HAD BEEN DECIDED. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 GEORGE 01684 01 OF 02 301638Z

B. CUBA IN AFRICA. CASTRO SOUGHT GUYANA'S SUPPORT FOR CUBA'S ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA. HE TOLD THE GUYANESE THAT CUBANS WERE TRAINING THE MOZAMBICAN ARMY IN CONVENTIONAL MILITARY TECHNIQUES. IN ANGOLA SWAPO TROOPS WERE BEING TRAINED, AND ABOUT 300 CUBAN TECHNICIANS AND ADVISERS WERE IN ETHIOPIA. GUYANESE RESPONSE WAS THAT GUYANA WOULD WAIT UNTIL THE OAU HAD MADE ITS POSITION CLEAR BEFORE DECIDING ON ITS ATTITUDE.

C. NON-ALIGNED MATTERS. CASTRO'S PURPOSE IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT WAS TO TRY TO RADICALIZE NAM POSITIONS, AND HE HAD ARGUED THAT GUYANA SHOULD SUPPORT CUBA'S POSITION ON BASIS OF "SOCIALIST SOLIDARITY." CASTRO'S EMPHASIS WAS SHIFING FROM POLITICAL TO ECONOMIC ISSUES. BURNHAM HAD RESPONDED THAT HE VIEWED THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AS A LOOSE, BROAD GROUPING WITH ETHNIC DIVERSITY. IT COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO BE TOTALLY UNIFIED ON ANYTHING. COMMENT: WILLS COMMENTED TO ME THAT THE GOG WOULD NOT FOLLOW CUBA'S LEAD IN RADICALIZING THE NAM. END COMMENT.

D. WESTERN HEMISPHERE. CASTRO TOLD THE GUYANESE HE

DID NOT PLAN TO MILITARILY INTERVENE IN BELIZE. WILLS
GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT (CONTRARY TO HIS PREVIOUS
IMPRESSIONS) CASTRO DID NOT PLAN MILITARY ADVENTURES
OR SUBVERSIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN OR ELSEWHERE IN LATIN
AMERICA WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF BOLIVIA. THE
REASON FOR THIS WAS NOT THAT CASTRO WAS NOT INCLINED
TO DO SO, BUT THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD NOT PROVIDE
MILITARY BACKING FOR WESTERN HEMISPHERE INITIATIVES.
E. CASTRO DESCRIBED PRIME MINISTER ERIC WILLIAMS AS
A PAWN OF THE US, AND ASSERTED THAT WILLIAMS WAS
TRYING TO ESTABLISH A CARIBBEAN GROUPING OF NATIONS
EXCLUDING JAMAICA, GUYANA, AND CUBA.
F. GUYANESE INTERNAL POLITICS. THE GUYANESE SOUGHT
TO CONVINCE THE CUBANS THAT THE PNC, NOT THE PPP,
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 GEORGE 01684 01 OF 02 301638Z

WAS THE VIABLE GUYANESE POLITICAL PARTY, AND MORE-
OVER, IT HAD THE BEST CHANCE FOR UNITING THE COUNTRY.
BURNHAM CALLED ON EX-PPP LEADER, RANJI CHANDISINGH,
TO DESCRIBE THE BACKGROUND AND WEAKNESS OF THE PPP TO
CASTRO. THE PNC STRATEGY OF WINNING EAST
INDIAN SUPPORT AWAY FROM JAGAN'S PPP WAS DESCRIBED.
CASTRO HAD RESPONDED THAT JAGAN REMAINED HIS PERSONAL
FRIEND BUT HE WOULD NOT TAKE SIDES IN GUYANA'S
INTERNAL POLITICS AND HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD
COOPERATE WITH BURNHAM'S GOVERNMENT. THE GUYANESE
DID NOT BLUNTLY REMIND CASTRO THAT HIS EMBASSY
WAS ACCREDITED TO THE GOG NOT THE PPP AS WILLS HAD
SAID THEY WOULD (REFTEL B, PARA.4).

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 GEORGE 01684 02 OF 02 301654Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00
PM-03 L-01 DODE-00 PRS-01 IO-06 SP-02 EUR-08
EB-04 AF-04 EA-06 /070 W
-----018628 301717Z /40
R 301540Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5007

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1684

LIMDIS

G. SOVIET ATTITUDES. CUBAN VICE PRESIDENT CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIQUEZ, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE SOVIETS, SAID THE SOVIETS FELT THE PNC SHOULD STRIVE TO ACHIEVE NATIONAL UNITY TOGETHER WITH JAGAN. THEY COULD NOT JETTISON JAGAN BECAUSE HIS PPP WAS A RECOGNIZED AND ACCEPTED "SOCIALIST" PARTY BY THE SOCIALIST "INTERNATIONALE." FOR THE PNC TO ACHIEVE FULL RECOGNITION AND MATERIAL AND POLITICAL SUPPORT, IT SHOULD BECOME A TRUE SOCIALIST PARTY AND JOIN THE COMMUNITY OF "SOCIALIST" (I.E. COMMUNIST) PARTIES. BURNHAM, ACCORDING TO WILLS, REACTED ADVERSELY AND STRONGLY TO THIS SUGGESTION, SAYING IT WAS UNACCEPTABLE AND THE SOVIETS SHOULD SAY THESE THINGS DIRECTLY THROUGHT AMBASSADOR KOTENEV RATHER THAN USE AN INTERMEDIARY. H. BURNHAM REPORTEDLY TOLD CASTRO THAT GUYANE'S PRINCIPAL AID DONORS WERE THE US, CANADA, GREAT CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 GEORGE 01684 02 OF 02 301654Z

BRITAIN, WESTERN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE PROPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA. THE SOVIET UNION HAD NOT BEEN HELPFUL.

I. WILLS TOLD CASTRO THAT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN URGING THE GUYANESE NOT TO TAKE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES, THAT THE GUYANESE HAD TOLD HIM THEY DID NOT AGREE WITH HIS RECOMMENDATION. CASTRO REPLIED THAT HE AGREED IT WAS A GOOD IDEA TO SEEK AND RECEIVE ASSISTANCE FROM THE US, INCLUDING CAPITAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM PRIVATE CORPORATIONS.

J. TRADE. CUBA WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO BUY RICE OR TIMBER FROM GUYANA, BUT WOULD TRY TO HELP GUYANA SELL RICE TO OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES.

MOZAMBIQUE AND ANGOLA WERE POSSIBLE BUYERS.

K. US TRADE EMBARGO. CASTRO ASKED THE GUYANESE TO APPROACH ANDREW YOUNG DURING IS VISIT TO GUYANA ABOUT LIFTING THE US TRADE EMBARGO ON CUBA. THE GUYANESE AGREED TO REPEAT CASTRO'S REQUEST BUT SAID THEY WOULD NOT ACT AS AN ADVOCATE FOR CUBA.

L. FOREIGN POLICY. THE GUYANESE TOLD CASTRO THAT HE SHOULD NOT EXPECT THE GOG TO FOLLOW CUBA'S FOREIGN POLICY.

M. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN CUBA. THE GUYANESE DELEGATION OBSERVED THAT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN CUBA WERE EXTREMELY BAD. PERSONNEL AT THE GUYANESE EMBASSY COMPLAINED BITTERLY OF LIVING CONDITIONS. THE WIFE OF A GUYANESE OFFICIAL SAID SHE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO BUY EGGS FOR TWO WEEKS.

N. CONSTITUTION. ATTORNEY GENERAL MOHAMED SHAHABUDEEN HAD INQUIRED INTO CERTAIN FEATURES OF THE CUBAN CONSTITUTION. WILLS EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT THE GUYANESE HAD TOLD CUBAN LEADERS THAT THE GUYANESE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 GEORGE 01684 02 OF 02 301654Z

INTENDED TO KEEP "WHITEHALL NORMS" IN ANY CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION. THE GUYANESE CONSTITUTION, HE SAID, WOULD NOT BE A "SOCIALIST" CONSTITUTION.

4. GENERAL IMPRESSIONS. AFTER WILLS COMPLETED HIS OFTEN RAMBLING AND DISJOINTED DESCRIPTION, I MENTIONED THAT I HAD NOTICED MUCH CONFUSION IN GEORGETOWN, EVEN AMONG GUYANESE OFFICIALS, OVER THE SUDDEN TRIP. WILLS RESPONDED THAT THE SYMBOLISM EVOKED BY THE BURNHAM-CASTRO MEETING WAS NOT GOOD, BUT SUBSTANTIVE EFFECTS OF THE TRIP ON BURNHAM AND THE REST OF THE GROUP WOULD HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON GOG POLICIES. MINISTER JACK PARTICULARLY HAD COME AWAY WITH A NEGATIVE OPINION OF CUBA, AND THE ENTIRE GROUP WAS MORE PESSIMISTIC THAN BEFORE ABOUT RECEIVING ASSISTANCE FROM THE USSR. CUBAN AND GUYANESE LEADERS NOW UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER MORE CLEARLY THAN BEFORE.

5. COMMENT. THE EXTRAORDINARY STORY ABOUT AMBASSADOR MARTINEZ HAVING ENGINEERED THE VISIT, DECEIVING THE TWO LEADERS, STRETCHES ONE'S CREDULITY; HOWEVER, I WITHHOLD JUDGMENT ON THAT ASPECT OF WILLS' COMMENTARY. READING BETWEEN THE LINES OF WILLS' WORDS, I SUSPECT THAT THE GUYANESE MADE A MAJOR EFFORT TO CONVINCE CASTRO TO ABANDON JAGAN, AND THEY APPEAR NOT TO HAVE RECEIVED AN ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY RESPONSE.

6. FROM THE FEEDBACK WE HAVE BEEN GETTING SINCE BURNHAM RETURNED TO GUYANA, IT APPEARS THAT BURNHAM AND WILLS INTEND TO USE THE VISIT AS PART OF A JUSTIFICATION FOR A SWITCH TO MORE OPEN PRO-WEST POSITIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY HAVE CASTRO'S JUDGEMENT THAT IT IS ALL RIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST COUNTRY TO SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM THE US AND EVEN FROM PRIVATE SOURCES. THIS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE USED TO

QUELL RADICALS AT THE UP-COMING PARTY CONGRESS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 GEORGE 01684 02 OF 02 301654Z

7. WILLS WOULD TRY TO MINIMIZE ANY ADVERSE EFFECT
OF THE VISIT ON US-GOG RELATIONS AND MAY NOT THEREFORE
HAVE CONVEYED ALL DETAILS OF THEIR MEETINGS WITH THE
CUBANS. ALSO BURNHAM IS KNOWN TO LIKE AND ADMIRE
CASTRO AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND HE REGARDS CUBA AS A
PART OF THE CARIBBEAN WHICH MUST BE CONSIDERED
IN GUYANA'S REGIONAL POLICY. WHAT WILLS HAS SAID,
THEREFORE, MUST BE WEIGHED AGAINST THESE CONSIDERATIONS.
BLACKEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 30-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977GEORGE01684
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770274-0310
Format: TEL
From: GEORGETOWN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977072/aaaaabcc.tel
Line Count: 295
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 59f50d64-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 77 GEORGETOWN 1595, 77 GEORGETOWN 1597
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1750420
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FONMIN WILLS COMMENTS ON BURNHAM'S TRIP TO CUBA
TAGS: OVIP, CU, GY, (CASTRO, FIDEL), (BURNHAM, L F S)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/59f50d64-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009